

NWS Melbourne Marine Web Letter

February 2010

Cool/Dry Season

The dry/cool season so far this year has been more dynamic than normal, which was expected due to el Niño conditions. Mid latitude weather systems have brought frequent periods of breezy to windy conditions and disturbed seas. There have been several cases where boats have capsized due to gusty winds and dangerous waves.

What wasn't expected was the intense cold period during the first half of January (Melbourne had 8 out of 9 days with freezing temperatures at one point). This resulted in very cold Continental Shelf water temperatures. Coastal observers reported the coldest surf temps since the Christmas 1989 freeze event; Daytona Beach (48) and Cocoa Beach (51).

Periods of windy conditions and the threat for strong-severe storms moving offshore should continue through at least March as the el Niño is forecast to persist. Visit the [Experimental Dry Season Forecast](#) for a thorough discussion of how El Niño affects East Central Florida.

Addition of Wave Period to Coastal Waters Forecast

In early December, we started adding the [Dominant Wave Period](#) to the [Coastal Waters Forecast](#) (first 3 periods of the forecast). This can be very challenging when there are swells impacting the water and wind waves are in the process of increasing. The meteorologists are gaining experience in wave period forecasting, but if you have specific feedback that is contradictory to our forecast, remember that we have a 24x7 number (**321-255-0212**—after hours **Ext. 242**).

The wave periods are not available in the point and click forecasts. Therefore consult the forecaster produced version of the [Coastal Waters Forecast](#). Additionally, the [NOAA Wave Watch Model](#) has forecast wave periods out to 7 days.

Nearshore Wave Model

Some of the output from our nearshore wave model has been going into our forecast database. Another higher resolution model for the nearshore waters (SWAN) will also become available in March. The result should be improved wave height and period forecasts near the coast.

Talks

The dry/cool season is a good time for me to get out and give talks about marine forecasting. If you are interested, the best way to contact me is via [email](#).

Randy Lascody